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# Programs and services for senior citizens







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# Introduction

Today, in Ontario and in the rest of the country, people are living longer and healthier lives. The older people in the community—seniors—are becoming more active and independent than ever before.

One-third of all seniors in Canada live in Ontario. Statistics indicate that by the year 2001 there will be approximately three million seniors in this country.

Today, less than 10 per cent of Ontario's seniors live in homes for the aged, nursing homes or other seniors' residences. That means approximately 90 per cent are living on their own or with families or friends.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services believes that these figures indicate, more than ever, a need for accessible and adequate services for those members of our society who have contributed so much.

The following pages briefly outline some of the major programs offered by the ministry especially for seniors. More detailed information can be obtained by contacting the local area office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services or by contacting the information centre in your community.



# *Homes for the aged in Ontario*

Ontario's homes for the aged offer seniors a place to call "home". They strive to offer assistance and protection without a loss of dignity, privacy or independence.

In these homes, residents receive a high standard of care and may participate in various activity programs.

## ***What exactly is a home for the aged?***

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Homes for the aged offer temporary or long-term residency including accommodation, meals, personal and medical care, and a range of social and recreational activities for older people who, for various reasons, cannot continue to live independently in the community.

## ***Who operates homes for the aged?***

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Homes for the aged are operated either by municipalities or by non-profit charitable organizations.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides the homes with funds to pay all or part of the cost for people who cannot afford the full rate.

### **Municipal homes**

These homes are operated under the Homes for the Aged and Rest Homes Act which requires every municipality to establish a home on its own or with other municipalities.

Some municipal homes use private homes called satellite homes to house seniors. Seniors living in a satellite home have full use of the facilities provided at the home for the aged with which it is linked.

### **Charitable homes**

Non-profit charitable organizations also operate care facilities for seniors under the Charitable Institutions Act. Many charitable homes recognize the differing ethnic, cultural and religious background of residents. Services in these homes take these needs into account.

## ***What types of care are offered in homes for the aged?***

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There are two levels of care offered in Ontario's homes for the aged—residential care and extended care.

Additional services to the community which may be provided by some homes include day programs, special care, home support services and vacation care.

### **Residential care**

This level of care is for residents who require less than one and a half hours of nursing care a day.

### **Extended care**

This level of care is for those who require one and a half hours or more of professional nursing, medical and personal care a day.

## ***Additional services***

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### **Day programs**

Seniors living in the community come to the home to be cared for and participate in programs during the day.

### **Special care**

Special care is offered for residents who are mentally confused and depend on someone to supervise them in activities of daily living. Thorough physical and psychological assessments are conducted before admission to this program.

### **Home support services**

Home support services operated by some homes for the aged make it easier for some people to manage the activities of daily living in the community. These include meals-on-wheels, home help and home maintenance services, transportation to shopping and medical appointments, friendly visiting and security checks, etc.

### **Vacation care**

Seniors living with their family may be accommodated in homes for the aged for a short term. Short-term admission relieves the family temporarily while knowing their elderly relative is being cared for. It also gives the senior a chance to have a “change of scenery”.

## ***What are these homes like?***

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Homes for the aged encourage independence and make possible that combination of freedom, caring and protection.



## **Description**

No two homes in the province are alike. They vary widely in terms of size and location. All of the homes, however, are guided by a high standard of care and cleanliness provided by carefully selected staff.

## **Medical and Nursing**

Homes for the aged do provide long-term care but are not intended as an extension of the services of a hospital or a mental health facility.

Residents have access to modern medical services - prevention, diagnosis and treatment. A medical director is appointed by each of the homes to advise on health care and to assure that medical care is available at all times. In most homes residents may retain their own physician if preferred.

## **Personal belongings**

While homes are completely furnished, in most cases residents are welcome to bring some furnishings to add a personal touch to their rooms.

## **Pastoral services**

Each home maintains an organized pastoral service in recognition of the importance of the religious needs of residents.

## **Activities and Facilities**

Every resident is encouraged to take part in activities offered on a regular basis. A residents' council is elected in each home to assist the administrator to identify and meet the needs of residents.

Most homes have an auditorium, a chapel, even a barber shop and beauty salon. Some have swimming pools and drop-in centres for the elderly living in the community. There are libraries, including books-on-wheels to bring reading materials to the bedridden. Residents are invited to try their skills in craft and hobby rooms, often equipped with power tools, looms, art supplies, etc. There are always comfortable furnished lounges for meetings, gatherings and other forms of recreation.

When a resident first arrives at the home he/she will be asked about his/her interests and hobbies. There is an abundance of activities taking place on an on-going basis in every home. Everyone has a chance to get involved in choir singing, sewing, painting, photography, games of all sorts — maybe some things they never had a chance to try before.

## ***Rates***

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### **Residential care**

Residents who are able will pay the per diem rate established by the home. If the resident is unable to pay the full amount, subsidy will be provided.

### **Extended care**

Residents who are able must pay a basic rate as determined by the provincial government. Partial-payment residents are required to pay as much as they can toward the basic rate.

Residents who receive a financial subsidy will also be eligible to receive a comfort allowance for their personal use. This amount, set by leg-

isolation, cannot be used as a contribution to the cost of a resident's maintenance.

## ***What about assets?***

If the resident is unable to pay the full cost of maintenance, his or her personal assets, except those specifically exempted by legislation, must be made available toward such payment. Such assets might include cash, money in bank accounts, savings bonds and so forth.

It is not necessary to sign over assets when a resident enters a home for the aged. The resident may enter into an agreement with a trustee of his choice to manage his income and assets. A home for the aged may act as trustee for a resident if an appropriate trustee cannot be found.

A resident's home is not considered as an asset available for the payment of maintenance costs.

## ***What criteria should be considered in choosing a home?***

First, consider location, size of home, social/recreational activities and religious services. Make arrangements to meet with the administrator to discuss the home's facilities.

The following is a list of some questions to ask:

- Is the home operated by the municipality or sponsored by a church or charitable group?
- Does the home have a specific religious or cultural affiliation?
- What are the home's rates?



- What is the capacity of the home? How many residents are currently living there?
- Can a husband and wife share a room?
- Are there elevators and ramps?
- Look around. Is the home clean and neat?
- What furniture and personal belongings can be taken to the home? Are a radio and television permitted? Does the home expect that the resident's furniture become property of the home? Does each resident have a closet and easy chair?
- What are the visiting hours? Do arrangements with the home have to be made to visit friends and relatives outside the home?
- What kinds of therapy are available or could be arranged?
- Are there provisions for personal banking services?
- Is there a charge for other services such as hair care or cable television?
- Are there restrictions on making or receiving telephone calls?
- What types of activities are available to the residents?
- Are both residential and extended care provided? If extended care is not provided where are residents placed when such care is required?
- Talk to the residents. Are they satisfied with their rooms, daily activities, food and care?
- Is there a residents' council?

### ***How do I go about finding a home for the aged?***

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Names and addresses of the homes for the aged in Ontario can be obtained from the Ontario Association of Homes for the Aged, 8 Director Court, Suite 201-202, Woodbridge, Ontario L4L 3Z5 or local offices of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

# ***Homemakers and Nurses Services Program***

## ***What is the Homemakers and Nurses Services Program?***

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The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program can provide needed help at home in times of crisis and when people have chronic problems. Under this program, homemakers and nurses visit elderly, handicapped, or convalescent people, so they can remain in their homes instead of going to hospital or an institution.

This service is administered by the Social Services Department of local municipalities which may use their own nurses or homemakers, or the services of agencies such as the Victorian Order of Nurses, the St. Elizabeth's Order of Nurses, the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Visiting Homemakers Association.

Part of the funding for this program is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. Payment is according to recipient's ability to pay.

## ***What services are offered by this program?***

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The services comprise housekeeping and specialized nursing including:

- meal planning, marketing and the preparation of nourishing meals and special diets;
- light, heavy and seasonal cleaning;
- light laundry, ironing and mending;

- personal care, including assistance in walking, climbing or descending stairs, getting out of bed, etc.;
- simple bedside care.

Nursing services refers to services that are provided by a nurse on a visiting basis. Nurses provide medical care in the home so that the person can remain there rather than be admitted into a hospital or an institution.

A physician must certify that the services of a nurse are necessary to enable a recipient to stay at home. The nurse can make as many visits as the physician requests to provide special medical care.

### ***What is the cost of these services?***

Clients who can pay for visiting homemaker or nurses services are expected to do so. In deciding whether someone is eligible for financial assistance, a municipality will take into account assets, income and monthly expenses.

### ***How do I get this service?***

For more information about the Homemakers and Nurses Services Program, contact the local municipal social services office or the nearest office of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (see page 20).



# ***Integrated Homemaker Program***

## ***What is the Integrated Homemaker Program?***

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To help improve existing community support services, the Ontario government introduced the Integrated Homemaker Program for frail seniors and disabled adults who need homemaker services to remain in their own homes. The provision of homemaker services under this program is based on *need* for service rather than financial or medical criteria.

Presently found in 16 locations, the Integrated Homemaker Program will be established across the province in phases.

## ***Who administers the program?***

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The program is funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and delivered through existing Ministry of Health Home Care Programs.

## ***What services are available through this program?***

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Under the Integrated Homemaker Program a homemaker goes into a person's home to provide basic services such as light housekeeping, help with dressing or other personal matters, cooking, laundry and shopping.

## ***How do I find out more about this program?***

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For further information call your local Home Care Program as listed under Home Care in the white pages of your telephone directory or contact the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services in your area (see page 20).

# ***Home support services***

The Ministry of Community and Social Services believes in the importance of providing support programs for the many seniors who are living in the community.

These seniors are able to remain independent through the support of services like meals-on-wheels and friendly visiting.

## ***Who runs the service?***

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Home support services are normally provided by approved private non-profit voluntary agencies or by municipalities. Most sponsoring agencies provide several services. Volunteers are the essential backbone of most services but most agencies employ one or two staff members.

## ***What services are available?***

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Among available services are the following:

- meals-on-wheels;
- security checks;
- friendly visiting;
- transportation;
- day programming for older adults.



## ***What do these services cost?***

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Although some of the services are provided by volunteers free-of-charge (i.e. friendly visiting), in most cases a small fee is required for the service.

The amount of the fee is based on what the client can afford. If payment is not possible, the home support agency can make arrangements for a subsidy. No one will be denied a service because of their financial situation.

## ***How do I find out more about these services?***

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For more information contact the ministry's nearest office (see page 20).

# ***Senior volunteers in service***

The Ministry of Community and Social Services sponsors continuing programs to involve seniors in community and social activities.

The ministry believes that seniors have special talents and knowledge to share with the community.

## ***Who are senior volunteers?***

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Senior volunteers are retired, 55 years old or over and in good health. They are mobile, familiar with their own community and genuinely interested in helping others.

## ***What are the responsibilities?***

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Senior volunteers are expected to participate in orientation and on-the-job training. They must be able to commit themselves to at least one year of service and be able to volunteer 16 to 40 hours a month. They are also asked to submit a monthly activity account. The volunteer receives support and supervision from ministry staff.

Although the services of a senior volunteer are performed on a voluntary basis, the ministry provides a reimbursement to cover expenses.

## ***What does the senior volunteer do?***

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The role of the senior volunteer varies according to the talents and interests of the volunteer and the types of needs in the community.

Senior volunteers can provide direct service like friendly visiting or can make referrals to the appropriate resources. The most important service for the volunteer is to relay information on various government programs which directly affect seniors.

There is a wide variety of activities in which the senior volunteer could become involved. The following are just a few:

- organizing others to provide necessary community services;
- setting up a home for the aged telephone reassurance service for the shut-ins in the community;
- transporting others to medical appointments;
- assisting in establishing a meals-on-wheels program;
- providing information on financial benefits available through federal and provincial agencies or programs such as homemakers, eye care, housing, legal aid, etc.

### ***How do I become a senior volunteer?***

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If you are interested in joining the Senior Volunteers In Service program, contact the local area office of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (see page 20).



# ***Elderly Persons' Centres***

## ***What is an Elderly Persons' Centre?***

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Elderly Persons' Centres offer seniors social, recreational or educational activities on a drop-in basis. Some centres also offer legal, financial and family counselling. Most centres cater to seniors who are mobile and able to get to the meeting place on their own initiative.

All centres are different, as are the programs offered at each location. Activities take place throughout the day. These may include exercise classes, yoga, pot-luck meals, gardening or even out-of-town excursions. There may be speakers or clinics for income tax, eye or foot care, or other needs expressed by the members.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services funds Elderly Persons' Centres which are operated by non-profit organizations or municipalities. In Ontario there are more than 100 centres which range in size and sophistication from a small meeting place to a full-fledged operation in its own building.

## ***Where are the Centres located?***

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To find the Elderly Persons' Centre in your area, contact your local Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services office (see page 20), or call your Community Information Centre, listed in the local government section of the blue pages in your telephone directory.

## ***Ministry offices***

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The Ministry of Community and Social Services has offices across Ontario. More information about the services and programs in this brochure can be obtained by contacting these offices. Please refer to the Government of Ontario section of the blue pages of your telephone directory for the nearest office.

## ***Community Information Centres***

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Throughout the province there are Community Information Centres to inform people about local resources available to them. Most communities have information centres and, if there is one in your area, it will be listed in the local government section of the blue pages in the telephone directory under Information.

## ***Further information***

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A number of other provincial government ministries offer programs specifically for senior citizens. Included among them are: Ontario Property Tax Grant (Revenue); drug benefit, nursing homes and home care (Health); senior citizens' apartments (Municipal Affairs and Housing); and consumer information (Consumer and Commercial Relations).

These programs and others are described in *Guide for Senior Citizens* which is available from:

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